ART AND ARCHITECTURE: A SURVEY OF DEVELOPMENT

Early Period

The history of Indian art is one of continuous progress and evolution. The earliest art forms of India can be seen from the excavations conducted in the Indus Valley towns of Harappa and Mohanjadaro. There has been from very early times a systematic co-ordination between art, religion and philosophy in India. The art of the Indus Valley is highly naturalistic. The buildings made of brick and wood in the Indus Valley civilization bear testimony to it. The Indus Valley art derived much inspiration from the art forms prevailing in the ancient Middle East countries during this period. The early specimens of Indian art can be identified from the miniature seals and sculptures of the Indus Valley age. Some of the examples of the Indus Valley art are the sitting images of Pasupathi or the Lord of the beasts, dancing girl, the sacred bull, the tree of life and the masculine torso, types of monkeys, female figures, cattles and terra cotta art model.

The sculpture of North India is believed to have developed only from the Vedic period. Buddhism gave rise to three types of structures namely, (1) Stupas, (2) the Chaityas were carved out of a single rock and these were used as the chapels where the Buddhist monks worshipped and the Viharas were the abodes whrere the lived. The Chaityas and Viharas had Stupas around them and the materials used initially were bamboo and other kinds of wood.

The tall footless Asoka Pillars were made of polished sandstones with animal figures on the capitals. The caves on the Barabur hills, carved out of a single rock were used as abodes of the monks during the rainy seasons. Buddhist stupas are found in Bharhut, Sanchi, Mathura, Bodhgaya and at Amaravathi in the Krishna basin in the South. Decorative figures were carved on the railings against

their background. The excavations at Brahmagiri reveal that people lived in wooden houses called b the name “Asokan Isila”. Megasthanese, the author of “Indica”, who stayed in the court of Chandragupta Maurya described Pataliputra as a wooden city, It is interesting to note that Chanakya’s Arthasastra has given a list of precautions against fire. There were well built mud houses also. The use of bricks and stones came only later.

From the period of the Mauryas, wood and stones, were used for building and there was an advancement in town planning.

The royal palace of Chandragupta Maurya excelled even the royal palace of Persia in grandeur and majesty. The bricks were dried in the sun. But unfortunately we have no remnants of the Mauryan architecture except for the pillars of Asoka made of highly polished sandstone. In most of the Asokan pillars there is a bull capital surmounted on an abacus. In some pillars, on the top we find a lion or a group of lions. The Sarnath Pillar capital has four majestic lions upholding the Dharmachakra. Have you seen the national emblem of the Government of India?

These Asoka pillars are examples of technical excellence. **V.A.Smith** says that the Asoka Pillars Bear Eloquent Testimony to The Skill and Resources of The Architects and Stone Cutters of the Mauryan age. We have found the remains of a Pillar Hall in Patna. The rock cut caves of the Asokan era are the exquisite examples of Mauryan architecture. They are polished like ‘glass mirrors’ and most of the Asokan inscriptions are incised on them, with extreme accuracy and well-cut letters. Another beautiful specimen of the Mauryan art is the small monolithic rail at Sarnath and a throne in the temple at Bodhgaya. These are cut out from single blocks of stone. These monuments are chiseled finely and the surface is polished

brilliantly and the skill of the artist reveal a variety of designs and floral patterns. The Indian craftsmen were well accomplished in the art of stone cutting.

During the reign of the Sunga dynasty, stone came to be used more and more. The Stupa at Bharhut in Allahabad ascribed to the 2nd century B.C. and to-day we have only the ruins of some of the railings. The traces of Kharoshti letters on the railings suggest the fact that the sculptors must have come from the North West of India. The monuments at Sanchi are the most beautiful of all the early monuments and they date from the 3rd century B.C to the 7th century A.D. There are richly decorated gateways on the four sides of the Stupa and the carvings depict the events in the life of the Buddha as described in the Jatakas. There are also figures of animals, birds and floral designs. They are mostly in the form of bas-reliefs.

The terra cotta figures of the Mauryan period are coarse and primitive. These are highly ornamented just like contemporary stone reliefs.

Painting is a very old art and we have references to painting in early Buddhist literature. In the 1st century A.D. we come to see a special style of art and sculpture. It is the "**GANDHARA"** sculpture. The Gandhara art consists mostly of sculptures and has reliefs in stone and terra cotta. In the Gandhara sculpture, Buddha is depicted very exquisitely in various postures. The Gandhara art was developed during the Kushana- rule.

During the Gupta period, the Hindu temple architecture began to take shape. Many stone temples which were built during the Gupta period have been destroyed due to the later Muslim invasions. However, from what little remains, we learn that there was a great development of temple architecture during the Gupta period. The Gupta temple has flat roofs, with short pillars with big square capitals. there were

porticos in the temples which later developed into the pillared mandapams. During the gupta period, the sculpture became somewhat refined. The iron pillar in Delhi belongs to this period. The gold coins of The Gupta period are exquisite pieces of art. The coins have inscriptions in Sanskrit. One of the silver seals of kumara Gupta has the figure of Garuda.

The paintings in the Ajanta caves belong to t the period, from 3rd century to 8th century A.D. The Ajanta paintings appear fresh even to this day.

Medieval Hindu Art-Deccan

From the period of Harsha, the artistic expressions departed from naturalism and realism. Spiritual themes came to be exhibited in art form. The medieval period was a great age of temple building. The variations in the architecture can be understood by studying the type of Vimanas which are of different types such as circular, conical, square, octagonal or horizontal. Further there is variation in style between the North and South. The Jain temples of Mount Abu are beautiful examples of fine architecture. The marble temples of Mount Abu show a free use of columns carved with all imagination. The marble ceilings are beautifully carved.

In Gujarat, a new ornate style of temple building developed. Wood work also flourished along with stone sculpture which was dedicated to Hindu God and deities. Along with stone sculpturing, metal sculpting also developed. Four armed figures and idols were made some time later.

In Deccan the earliest temple dates back to the 6th century A.D. There is the influence of the art forms of North and South in the Deccan architecture and art. The Chalukyas of Western India built temples in both Northern and Southern style. They also borrowed the excavation of cave temples from the Jains and Buddhists.

The ‘Mahabaleswar’ temple in Vatapi is a specimen of Chalukya style of architecture. The Ajanta caves which belong to the Chalukyan period contain fine frescos. Aihole is a temple city of the Chalukya period. The Virupaksha temple is constructed in the southern Dravidian style with high walls and gopurams on all sides. The Bull or Nandi is located in front at the main entrance near the **Dwaja Sthamba** and the minor deities and Gods have abodes in the court of the four **Prakarams**. The ‘Sanctum Sanctorum’ or the **Garbagriha** is separated from the pillared hall.

The Rashtrakutas continued the construction of cave temple. The earlier cave temples of Ellora were built by the Rashtrakuta kings. The figure of the “Thrimurthi’ is supposed to be the three faced image of Sivamahesamurthi. It is a colossal image of Lord Siva and we see the influence of the Dravidian style in all these shrines.

Hoysala Art and Architecture: The Hoysala temples contain beautiful decorations in the shape of polygons and stars. The towers are elaborately decorated with complicated sculptures and statues. The Hoysala architecture may at best be considered as an improvement of the Chalukyan art. The Kesavaswamy temple at Belur and the Siva temple at Halebid (Dwarasamudra) are brilliant examples of the Hoysala architecture. The Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid is decorated with sculptures depicting scenes from the Ramayana. The dress and ornaments which are depicted on the sculptures give us an idea about the social life and conditions prevailing during those times. The important among them are the Jambukeswara temple at Tiruvanaikoil in Trichy and the Someswara temple in a village near Trichy and the Someswara temple in a village near Trichy which was originally called Someswara now corrupted to Samayapuram. The ancient Siva temple is in ruins now.

The most striking sculpture of this period is the colossal monolithic statue of Gomateswara which was carved out of a block of rock at Sravanabelagola in983 A.D by one Chamunda Raya, minister of Fajamalla IV (974 – 98 5A.D.). It is a specimen of the Western Ganga art. The temples at Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar depict the Eastern Ganga art. Similarly, the Bahmini kings and Vijayanagar rulers too have made very valuable contributions in buildings and structures, which depict the grandeur of the medieval architecture during this period. The **'Gol Gumbaz'** (Circular domes) are very fine examples of the blend of Muslim, Persian, Mughal and Hindu architecture.

South Indian Art Architecture: The south Indian art has a long history. The cave with inscriptions dating back to 1st century B.C has been discovered in the Rock Fort temple at Tiruchirapalli in Tail Nadu. We have no definite evidence to ascertain the state of the development of art and architecture in South India, especially south of Tungabhadra, due to the perishable nature of the materials usd in sculptures and inscriptions. The use of stones in architecture begins from the Pallava period and the history of art in South India starts only from the age of the Pallavas.

The history of the development of art and architecture is divided into five periods as

(1) The Pallava,
(2) Early Chola, 850-1100,
(3) Later Chola, 1100-1350,
(4) Vijayanagar, 1350-1600 and
(5) The Modern (after 1600).

In the Pallava art we have different styles as (1) Mahendra style, (2) Mamalla style, (3) Raja Simha style and (4) Aparajitha style. The Pallava kings

Mahendravarman (600-630 A.D.) Known also as Mamallan were great builders and they were deeply interested in art and architecture. The rock cut temples of Siva and Vishnu are the special features of this period and these were constructed in many places like Tirukalukundram (near Madras), Sittanavasal near Pudukottai, and Dalavanur near Gingee in South Arcot, Mahendravadi (near Arakonam) and Mamandur. Mahendravarman was an artist par excellence. He assumed the name of **'Chitrakarapuli'**.

The rock temples at Mahabalipuram which was a great port are celebrated in the hymns of Alwars as **'Mallai or Kadal Mallai'**. The Pancha Pandava Rathams and the seven pagodas at Mahabalipuram are the best examples of monolithic rock temples. Each of them is carved out of a single rock. There is also in **Mahabalipuram** a rock cliff covered with stone carvings in relief called 'Arjuna's Penance'. Latest researchers have asserted that the sculpture only depicts Arjuna's Penance and his meeting with Lord Shiva in the guise o a kirata (Hunter).

The earliest rock cut temple of the Pallava period was constructed by Parameswaravarma I at Kuram near Kanchipuram between 670- 1080 A.D. The numerous temples which are now existing in and around Kanchipuram belong to the Pallava period conforming to the different styles. The most notable of them are the Kailasanatha temple and Vaikunta Perumal temple. In general during the Pallava period we deserve the brisk growth of art and architecture with different types of stone cut temples containing marvelous sculptures and stone cut images.

The Cholas continued the Pallava art tradition with some modifications. The greatest builders among the Cholas were Rajaraja Chola, Rajendra Chola, Kulottunga Cholas and Parantaka chola. King Rajaraja built the famous Brahadeeswara temple at Tanjore and the Big Bull in the temple made out of a

huge monolith. The early Chola architecture is characterized by tall and elaborately carved pillars. Rajendra Chola built a new city called Gangai Konda Cholapuram to celebrate his victory over the kings in the Gangetic region and also constructed a Siva temple called Gangaikonda Choleswaram. The temples at Darasuram, Tirubhuvanam, and Kumbakonam all in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu are exquisite examples of chola architecture. The Nataraja temple in Chidambaram in South Arcot District was expanded and renovated by Vikrama Chola. All the 108 dancing postures (Karnas) described in the Bharat Sastra are found carved here at the eastern entrance whereas the supreme dance is 'reserved' for the Lord at the Sanctum Sanctorum. In the Pandya period temples with large and wide 'Prakarams' and Gopurams on four sides were constructed. The Pandya ruler Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan gave liberal donations to many temples and covered the roof of the Chidambaram Nataraja temple with gold. So he came to be known as **"Pon Veintha Pandian"** in later years.

The Vijayanagar rulers also were patrons of art and architecture. The Virupaksha temple is famous for its tall Gopuram and elaborately decorated Vimanam. Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar built the Hazara Ramaswamy temple. The temple walls and courtyard are covered with reliefs of scenes from Ramayana. The Raya Gopurams found in Kanchipuram, Chidambaram and Tadpatri are modeled after the great Gopurams found in the Vijayanagar temples. The ruins of the massive architecture are found in Hampi on the banks of the Tungabhadra River spread over a vast area of about nine miles. Krishnadevaraya's successor Achyuta Raya made liberal grants to the temples in tirupathi, Srirangam and other places, the unfinished Raya Gopuram was built during the reign of Achyuta Raya. The work of the same Raya Gopuram has since been completed by His Holiness

the Jeer Swamigal of Ahobila Mutt with 13 tier and it is now the tallest gopuram in Asia Measuring about 234 feet in height.

The Vijayanagar art tradition was continued by the later Nayak rulers of Madura in who made and installed the images (Bronze) of themselves with their wives. Thirumalai Nayak, the most famous ruler of the Nayak Kings of Madurai, who ruled between 1623-1659 A.D. expanded and connected the two temples of Meenakshi and Sundarewara. The Thirumalai Nayak Mahal in Madurai is a beautiful specimen of the well developed architecture of South India, especially Tamil Nadu. The Nayak rulers of Tanjore also were great patrons of art and architecture. The temple architecture in Tamil Nadu grew to new dimensions with vast enclosures or Prakarams to the temples. For instance the Srirangam Ranganatheswar temple has seven prakarams. The Multi pillared mandapams, massive halls and pavilions are some special features of the temple architecture which developed during the rule of the Nayak kings.

During the rule of the Muslims in Delhi, new ideas in architecture developed especially in the building of mosques and tombs. They had the knowledge to use cement, which facilitated the construction of domes, minarets and arches. The art of calligraphy developed during the Muslim rule. After the fall of the Delhi Sultanate, the nation carried on the same art traditions with variations according to locality.

The Mughal Art

In the early Mughal period, we see the influence of Persian art forms. The Indian art styles slowly developed and merged into the Mughal art. Akbar was a lover and patron of the fine arts. The tomb of Humayun is the earliest specimen of the Mughal art of building. Akbar built rhe city of Fatehpur Sikri to celebrate his

victories. During his days, the Hindu influence over the Mughal architecture became more predominant due to Akbar's rule were the Palace of Jodhbai, Humayun's Tomb, the Divan-i-Khas, Diwani Aam, the Buland Darwajah etc. Akbar also constructed the Fort of Agra.

The credit of constructing the impressive Delhi also goes to Akbar who made a all-out honest effort for the fusion of Hindu and Mughal art and architecture. Akbar developed the art of fresco paintings. He assembled the artists from different countries adorned the buildings and structures in **Fatehpur Sikri.**

Shah Jahan was the greatest builder among the Mughal rulers. The Mahal is world famous. The pearl Mosque, the Red Fort, Shajahanabad (the new city of Delhi) were the other structures ordered to be constructed by Shah Jahan He constructed the Jumma Masjid. Taj Mahal built to perpetuate the memory of hi queen Mumtaz is described as a 'dream in marble'. It took 22 years to complete at a cost of 50 lakshs of rupees.

Painting flourished in the region of Rajputana. Hindu mythology, occurrences in day to life, portraits, natural scenery, birds and animals were the common themes of these paintings, Night scenes were beautifully depicted. The Rajput style of painting later developed and spread to Tanjore during the reign of Maratha rulers. The art of miniature painting was developed. Two schools of painting namely**'Pahari**' and **'Kangra'** school were developed during the middle of the 18th century by the artists who had migrated from Delhi due to lack of royal patronage. The regions where this school of painting flourished are Jammu-Kashmir to Tihri-Garhwal and from Pathankot to Kulu valley. Pahari Pintings illustrate devotional love catering round Krishna and Radha. Krishna supporting Govardhana Giri is a fine Piece of Pahari school of art. The Mughal traditions of

painting were applied to Hindu art. Molaram (1760-1833 A.D.) was the most famous painter of this period.

The Later Art

With the coming of the English to India, the Western art began to flourish in India in the field of building. The Westerners were mostly engineers and they cared more for utility than to artistic taste and beauty. Many buildings were built on Western style. The Western influence was more marked in the art of painting too and we can see this from the Paintings of Ravivarma. Serfoji II, ruler of Tanjore was a lover of learning and art. He decorated the walls of his bathing hall, known as **Krishna Vilas** with paintings. Maharaja Krishna Raja Udayar of Mysore decorated his Jagmohan Palace with fine Paintings. The Raja himself was a fine artist. Lord Wellesley built the Government House in Calcutta and decorated it with Western art Paintings. A developed form of lithography was also introduced into India after the 1820's. The model paintings of Kerala style are available in the Mattancher palace.

The Indian art tradition reasserted itself from 1905 onwards. The new Indian style of Painting was developed by the Bengal School represented by Rabindranath Tagore and others. The other noted painters of the Bengal School are Nandalal Bose and Surendranath Gangoli. They had inspiration from Ajanta paintings. We can see the fresco Paintings on the model of Ajanta at the Mahabodhi Society Viharas in and around Mulgandhakutty. New experiments in sculpture were tried and evolved by Roy Chaudhary from Madras. Thus the art and architecture flourished in India from very early period and we see a continuous thread of growth and development in traditions of art and architecture down to the present century.

POINTS IN A NUTSHELL

1. The history of Indian art and architecture is a continuous evolution, through the centuries from the Indus Valley days to the Present day.
2. Sculpture of North India developed from the Vedic period.
3. The Asoka Pillars, Stupas, and other structures.
4. Mauryan Art, Gupta art-Medieval Art.
5. Deccan's contribution to the growth of Architecture – The Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Pallavas, The Bahmini and Vijayanagara and the Hoysala traditions.
6. The growth and development of art and architecture under the Delhi Sultan and the Mughals.
7. South Indian Art and architecture falls int five definite periods. The contributions of the Pallava, Cholas, Pandyas, Nayak rulers and other Maratha rulers of Tanjore.
8. The development of Painting from Ajanta to the modern period in the 20 th century.
9. The Pahari School and Kangara school of painting under the Mughals.
10. The paintings of Ravivarma – Krishna raja Udayar fo Mysore
11. The latest Bengal School painters. Rabindranath Tagore Surendranath Gangoli and Nandalal Bose.
12. The Modern Sculpture as developed by Roy Chaudhary

SELF - EVALUATION

A. Answer the following question.

1. Where do we, find the earliest art forms in India?
2. Mention the special features of the art traditions of the Indus Valley culture – Give some examples.
3. Mention the Buddhist contribution to the growth of architecture in the early period.
4. Write a not on the Asoka pillars found in different places in North India.
5. Write short notes on (i) Sanchi Stupa, (ii) Sarnath columns.
6. What are terra cotta figures? When did it develop?
7. What are the special features of the Gandhara Sculpture?
8. Write briefly about the special features I the architecture of Deccan in the medieval period.
9. Write notes on contributions of the Hoysalas to art and architecture. Mention two important temples built by the Hoysala kings.
10. What are the chief characteristics of the South Indian are and architecture?
11. Who were the great builder among the Pallava rulers ? Mention some temples and specimens of architecture of the Pallava period.
12. Write a short note on Mahabalipuram.
13. Name the kings of the Chola dynast. Who were the trea patrons of art and architecture – Where do we find the temples of the Chola period?
14. Trace the development of temple architecture under the Vijayanagara rulers.

15. Write briefly about the growth and development of art in the Mughal period.
16. What are the special features of the paintings developed in Rajputana ?
17. What are the features of Western architecture?
18. Write a note on the growth of the Modern Indian art?
19. Who are the recent painters of the Bengal school of Painting?

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The earliest specimens of Indian art are found in……and
2. The three types of Buddhist art forms are (1) ……, (2)…….. and (3)…….
3. The Asokan Pillars are made out of……
4. Megasthanese describes Pataliputra as a…….
5. The Gandhara art developed during the……..
6. King Mahendravarman had the special name…… due to his skill in painting.
7. The best specimens of Pallava architecture are found in…….
8. The Brahadeeswara Temple in Tanjore was built by……
9. The ruins of Vijayanagara are found in……..on the banks of the……..river
10. …….was the greatest builder among the Mughal reuler
11. The two schools of painting which flourished during the Mughal period ……and……

C. project to do.

1. Collect pictures of temples, and paintings from early days and prepare an album.

2. In the map of India mark the places given below.

1. Sanchi
2. Vatapi
3. Vijayanagar
4. Hampi
5. Dwarasamudra
6. Agra
7. Delhi
8. Mamallapuram
9. Tiruchirapalli,
10. Kanchipuram
11. Ajanta
12. Ellora
13. Chidambaram
14. Madurai
15. Mount Abu.